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The behavior and perception of personal digital archiving of Chinese university students

Xiangjun Feng

Email: jessi.feng@163.com

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Background

- Personal records are a kind of unique documentary evidence for both individual and the society.
- College students are heavy users of the Internet compared to the general population.
- It is important to understand what are university students' perception and behavior of personal digital archiving.



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Research Questions

- What are Chinese university students' understanding of and behaviour in archiving email and Q-zone (i.e., a social networking website created by Tencent) records?
- What are the problems in Chinese university students' email and Q-zone records archiving?
- In university students' email and Q-zone records preservation, who should be responsible for providing necessary guidance and suggestion? What are the relationships among these parties? What responsibilities does each party have?



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Research Methods

- Questionnaire: Sinn et al. (2011)'s questionnaire was used, with slight adaption, to collect data on Chinese university students' understanding of and behaviour in email and Q-zone records archiving
- Interview: information professionals were interviewed to solicit their opinions on which parties should be responsible for university students' personal web records archiving and what are their responsibilities

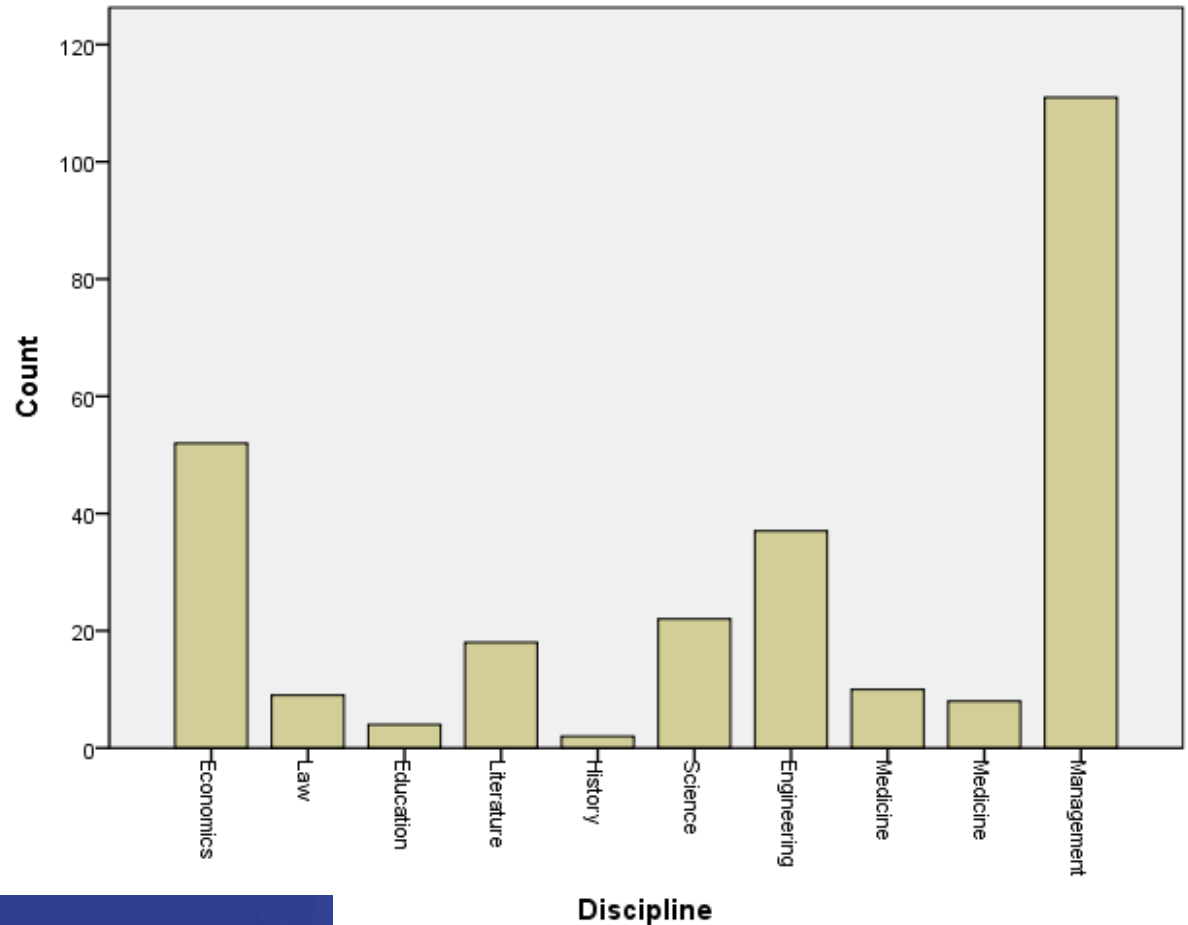


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Questionnaire Results:

Demographic information

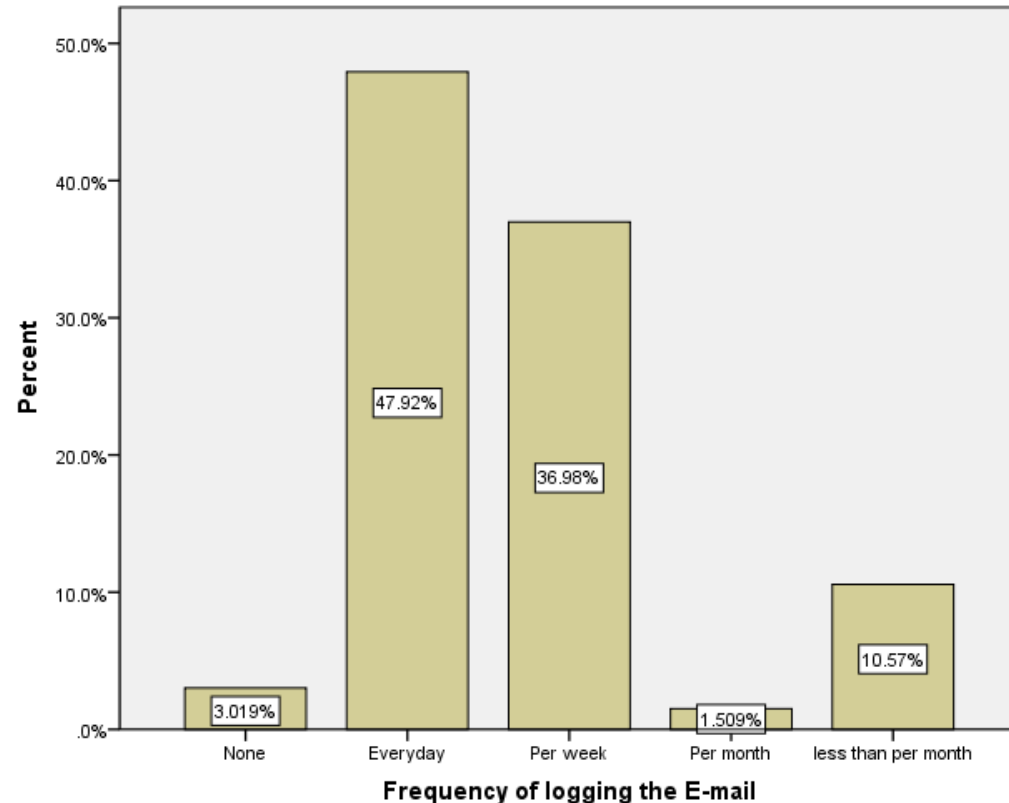
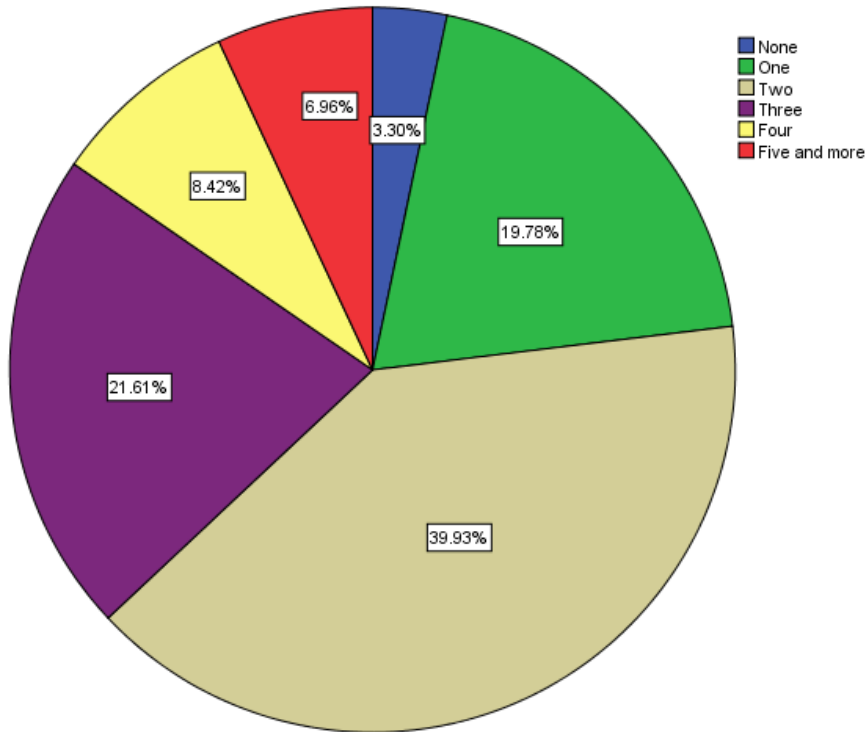
Economics 19.05%
Law 3.30%
Education 1.47%
Literature 6.59%
History 0.73%
Science 8.06%
Engineering 13.55%
Agriculture 3.66%
Medicine 2.93%
Management 40.66%



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Chinese university students' email accounts, length of use, and use frequency

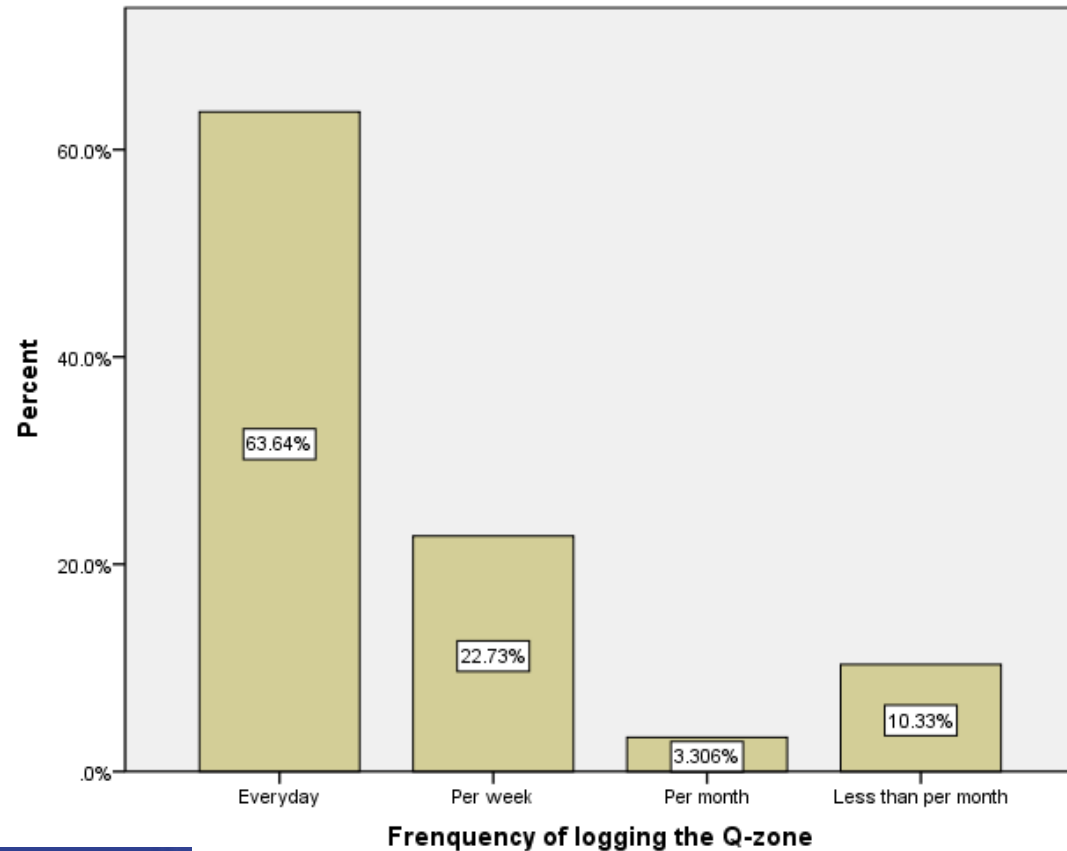
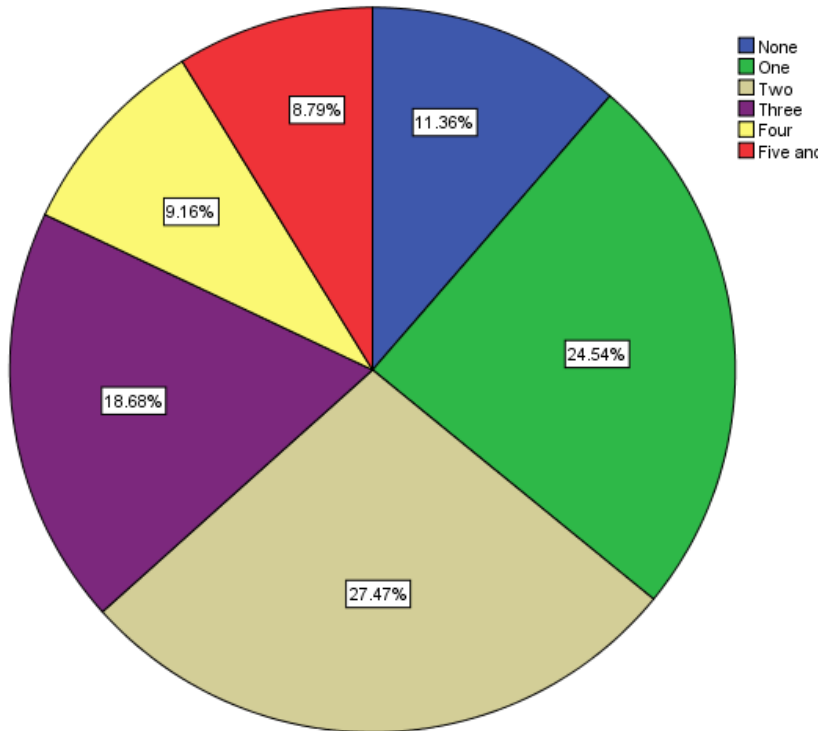
How many E-mail accounts do you have?



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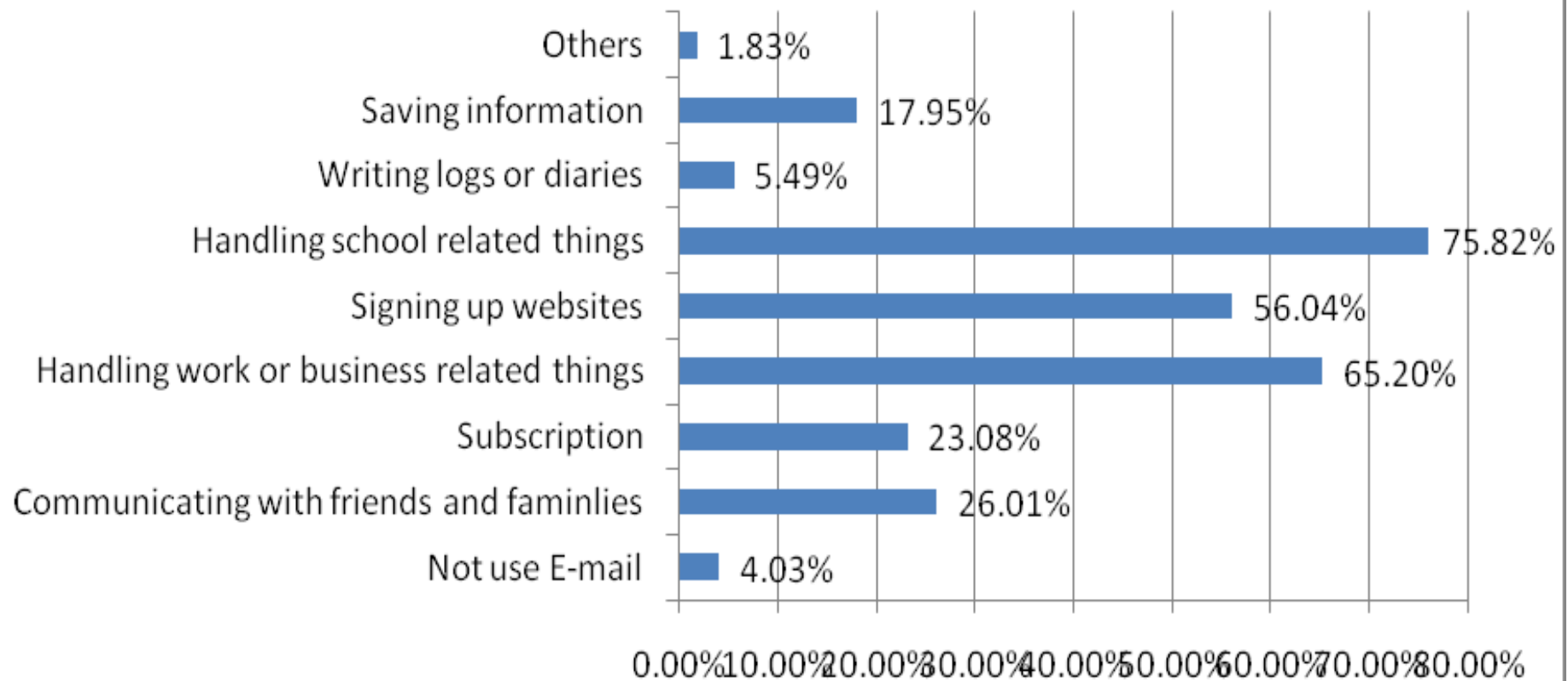
Chinese university students' Q-zone accounts, length of use, and use frequency

How many Q-zone accounts do you have?



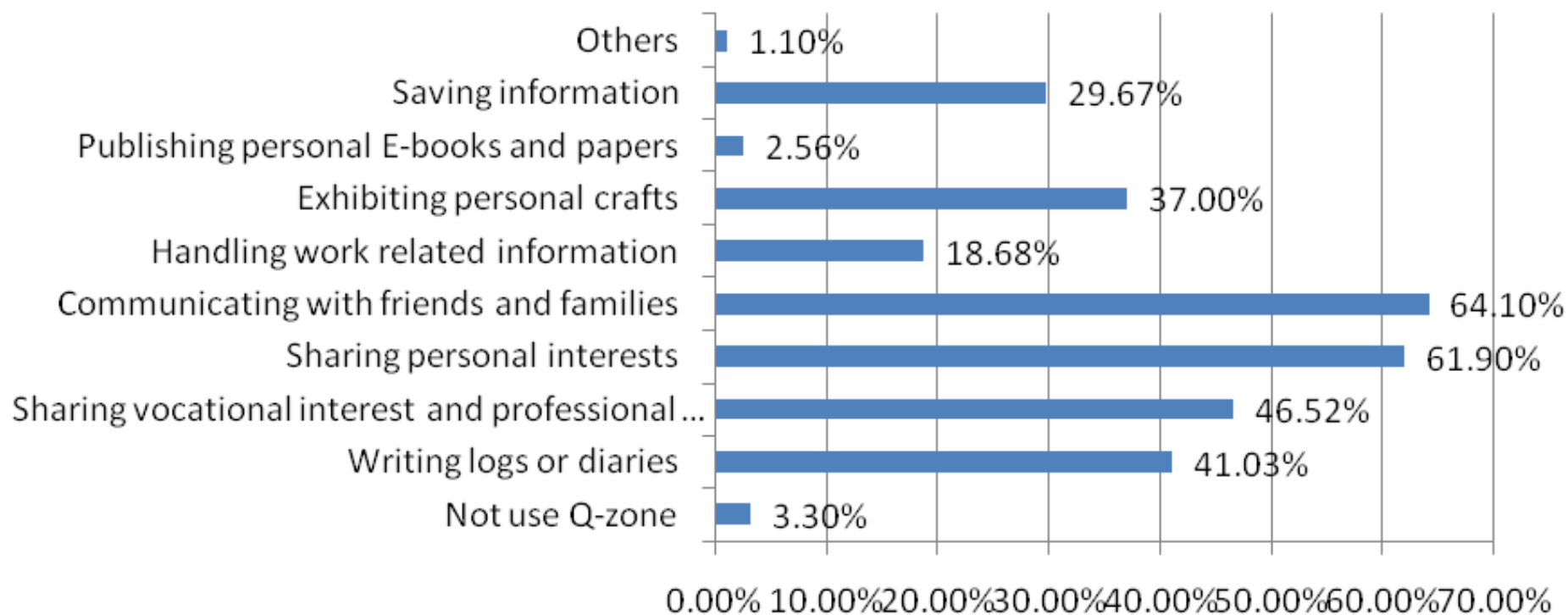
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What do Chinese university students use email for? (multiple choice)



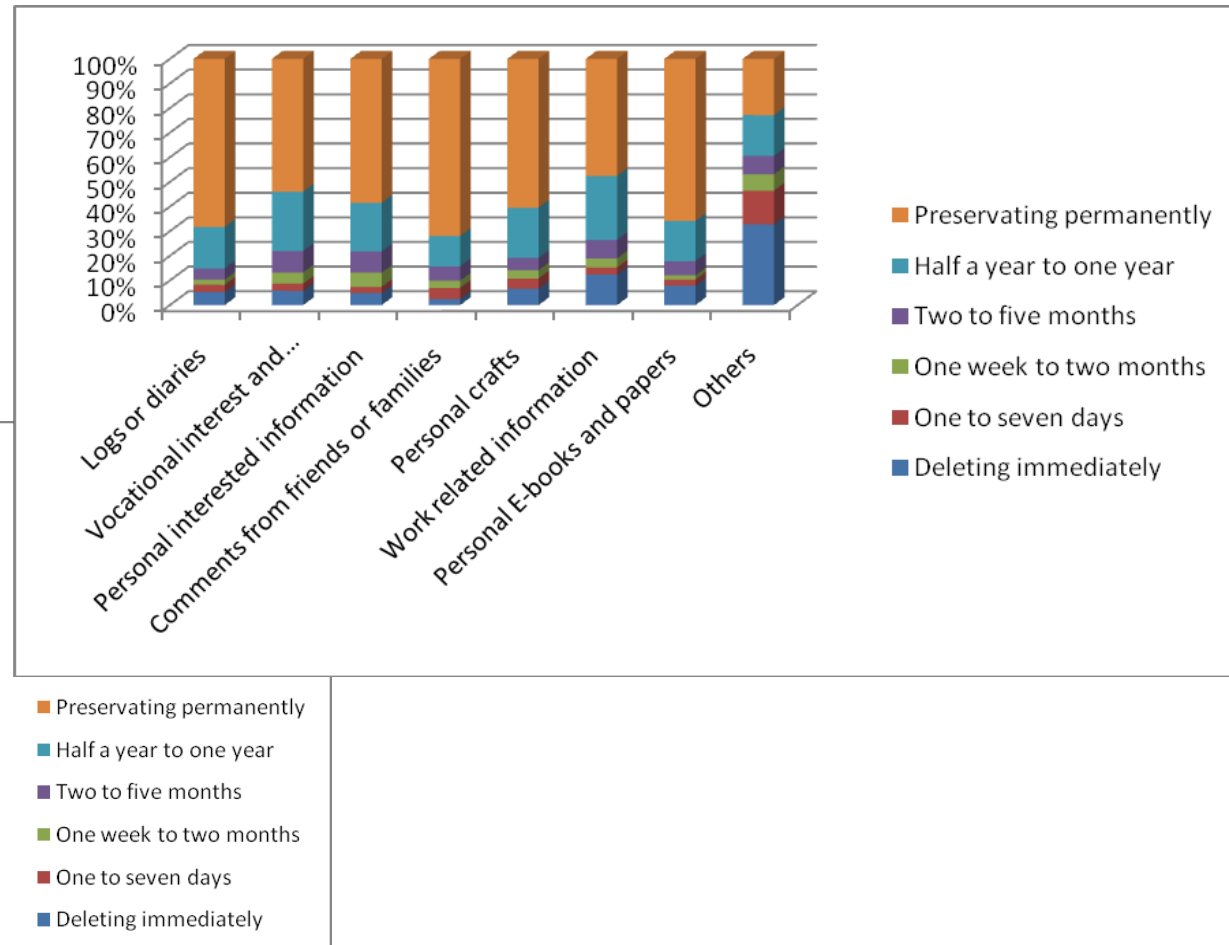
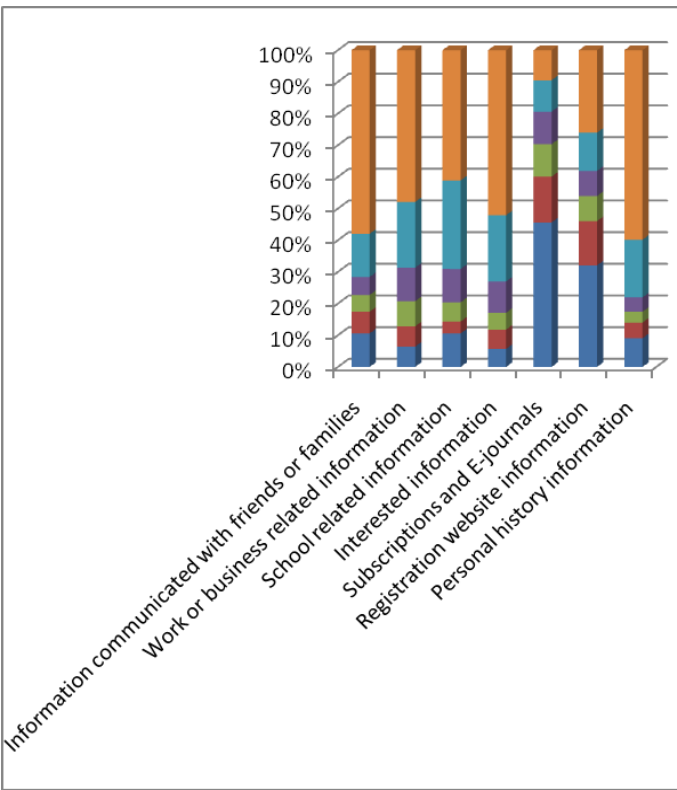
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What do Chinese university students use Q-zone for? (multiple choice)



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University students' perception of and attitudes towards email and Q-zone records preservation



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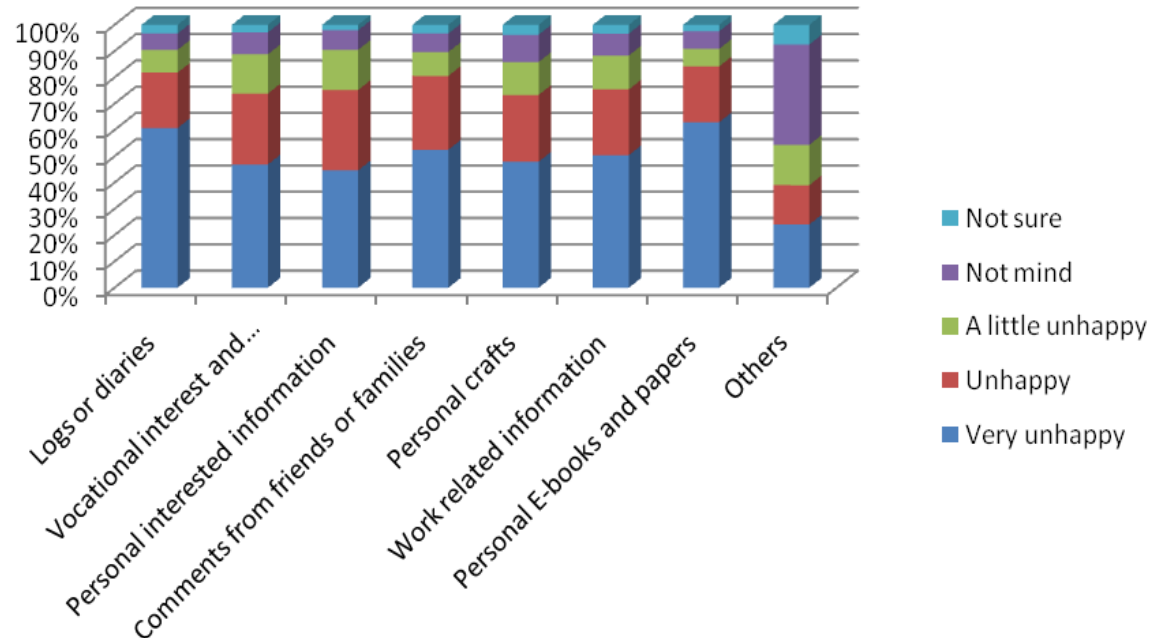
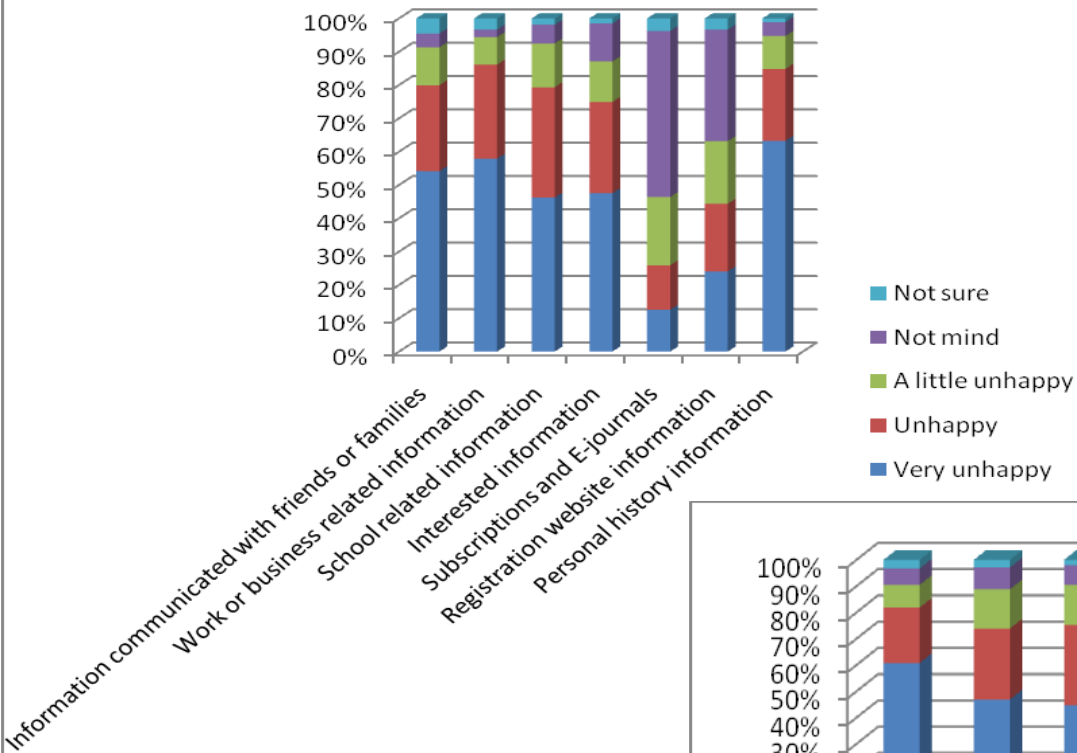
University students' perception of and attitudes towards email and Q-zone records preservation

- University students value personal records in email and Q-zone the most, because of their spiritual and emotional significance.
- Even though email is no longer the main way for informal communication in personal life and entertainment, its importance in personal records preservation remain unchanged.
- Retention period of personal records depends on their significance in personal history.



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Feeling on the loss of email and Q-zone records



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- University students have positive attitudes on personal web records preservation.
- University students commonly believe that email or Q-zone records are useful, valuable, thereby, should be preserved.
- University students regard email and Q-zone as important places for personal records preservation; email and Q-zone service provider should undertake such responsibilities.
- The longer university students believe the records should be preserved, the unhappier they are when the records are lost. This is consistent with Sinn et al. (2011)'s finding.



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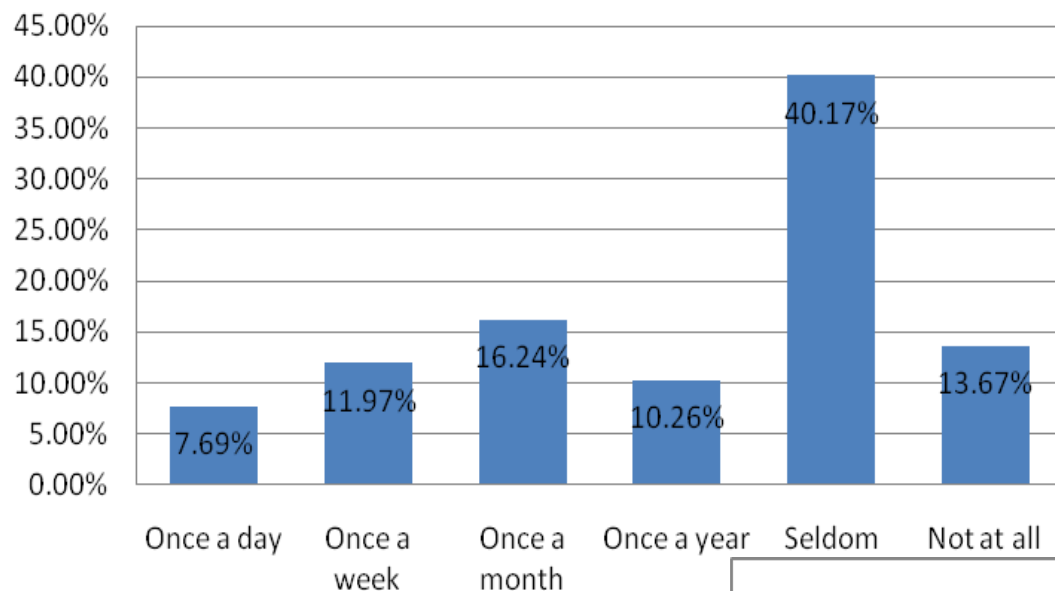
Email and Q-zone records preservation risk awareness and avoidance behaviour

- 42.86% respondents have considered the risks
- 43.59% respondents have never considered these risks
- 13.55% respondents are not sure



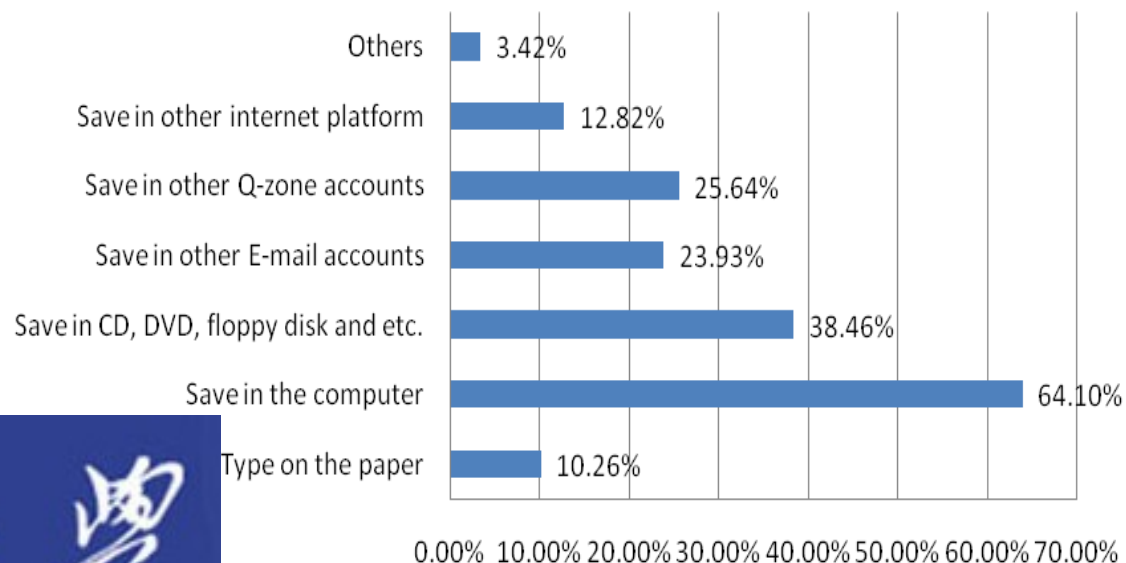
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How long do you backup E-mail or Q-zone?



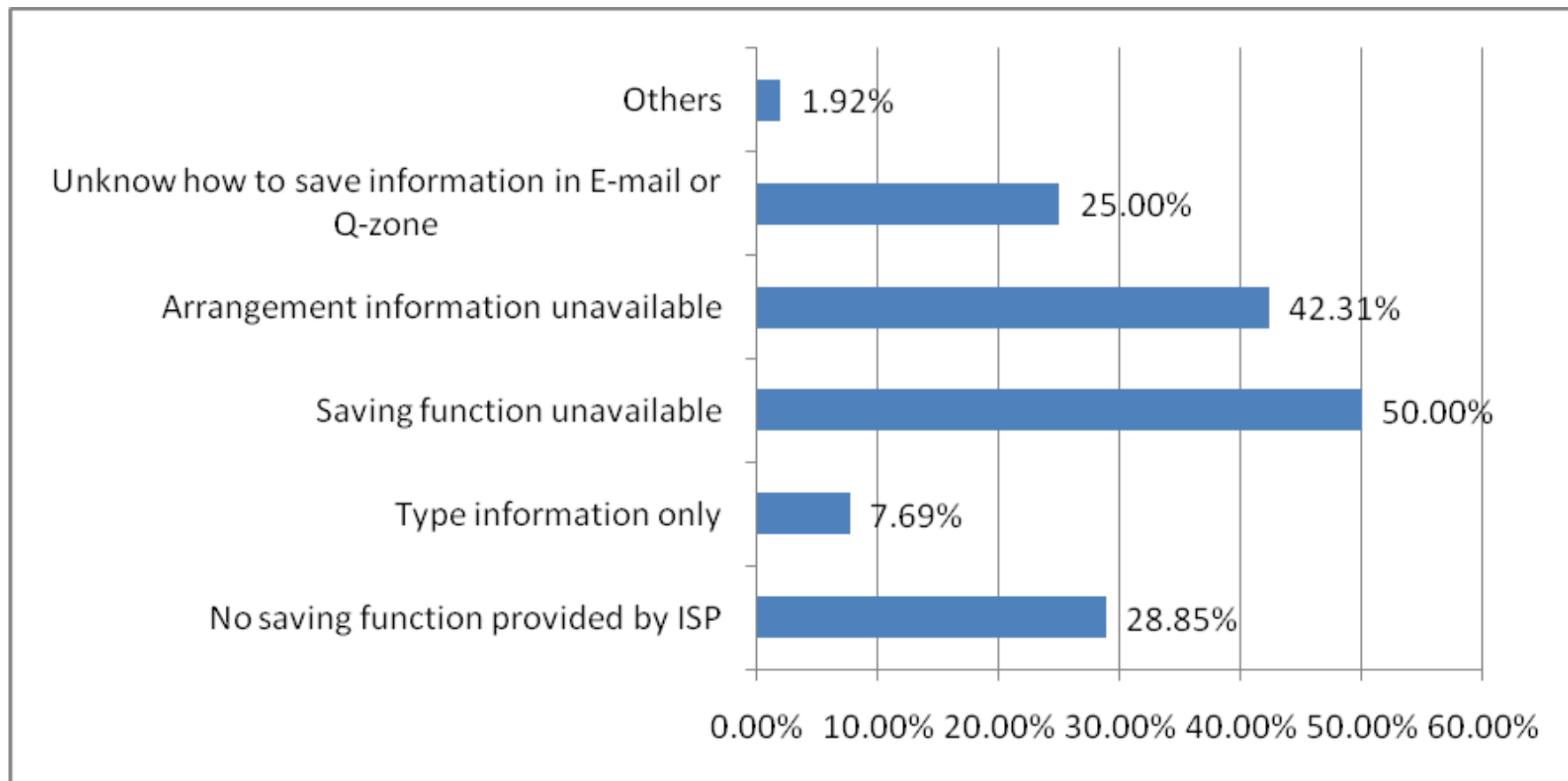
Email and Q-zone records preservation risk awareness and avoidance behaviour

How do you backup E-mail or Q-zone?



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Difficulties encountered in the preservation of email and Q-zone records



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- About 25% respondents say that, due to the lack of knowledge on the personal records archiving function of email and Q-zone, they encountered difficulties in records archiving.
- When web service provider fails to provide effective function for email and Q-zone records preservation, only 40% respondents sought other preservation tools, devices, applications or systems.
- Only 5% respondents tried other preservation tools or devices (e.g., Outlook, Thunderbird, the “Save As” function in web browser, Furl, or Google desktop)

**Email and Q-zone
records archiving
behaviour**



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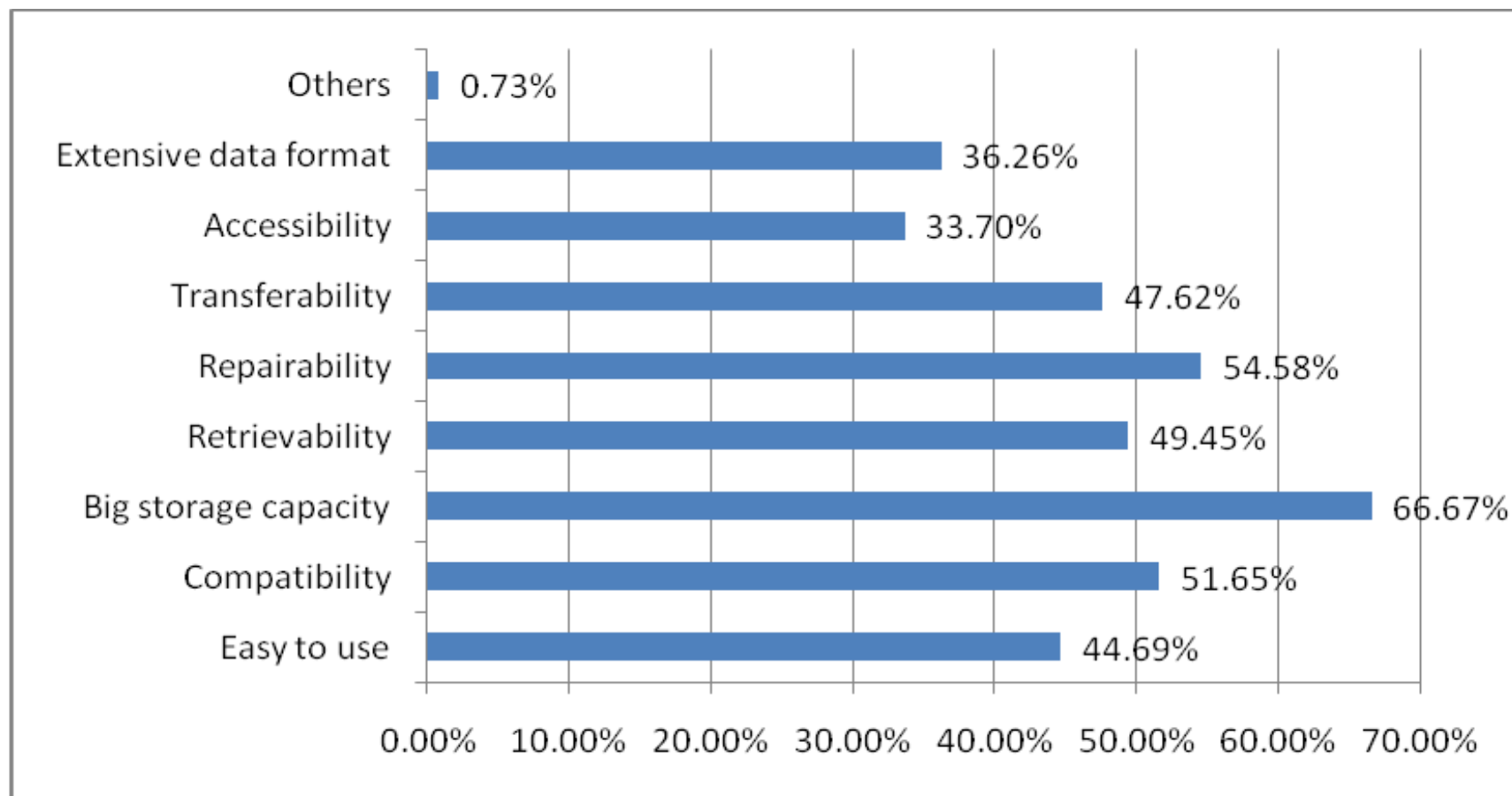
Email and Q-zone records archiving behaviour (Con't)

- Sources of difficulties and obstacles in email and Q-zone records archiving
 - Web service provider
 - University students themselves: students are not active in email and Q-zone records preservation



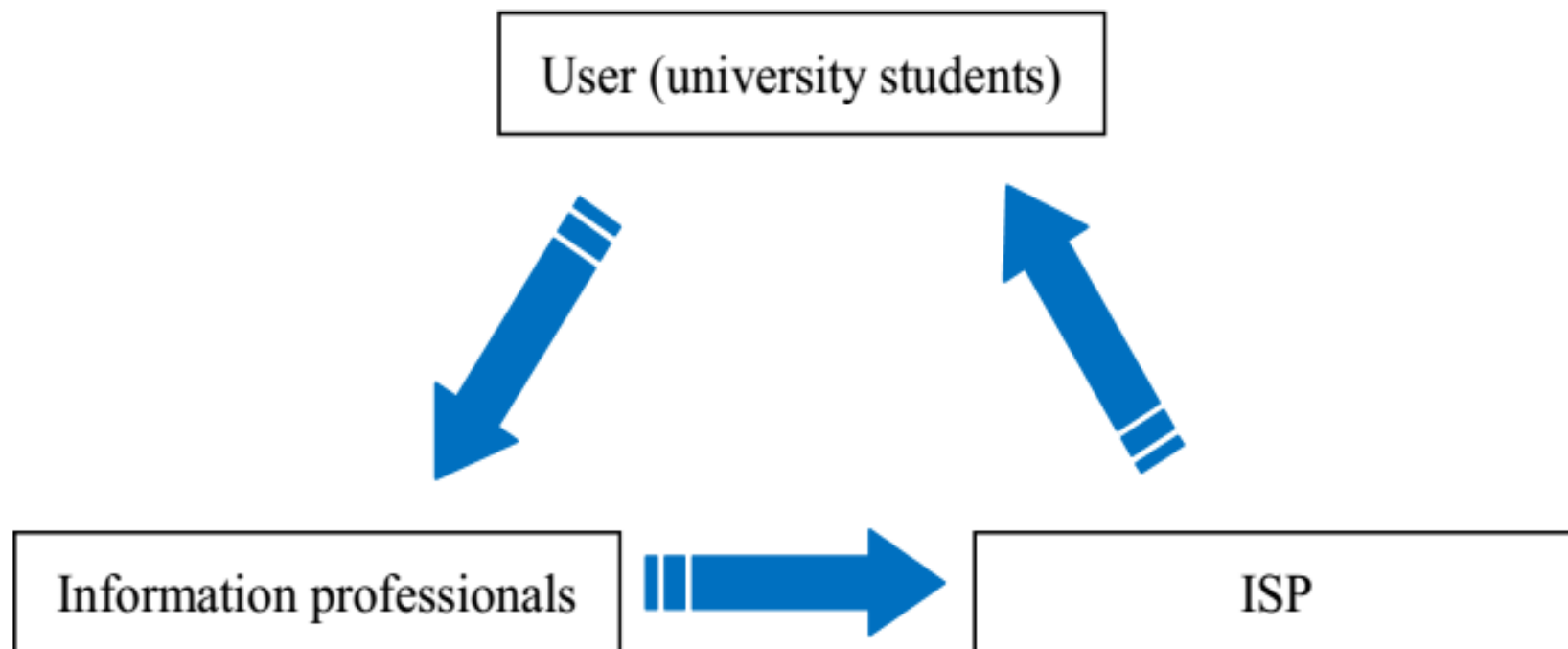
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Features good archiving tools should have



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Parties responsible for personal web records preservation and their relationships



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Parties responsible for personal web records preservation and their relationships: Web user (for this study, it is university students)

- Understand the importance of email and Q-zone records.
- Increase personal web records preservation awareness, and be more active.
- Learn related tool and function for web records preservation and improve practical abilities and information organization ability.
- Increase risk awareness, and raise habits to regularly back up email and Q-zone records.



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Parties responsible for personal web records preservation and their relationships: information professionals

- Influence other web users with their higher personal records preservation awareness and provide guidance on the actions to be taken for personal records preservation.
- Encourage more research studies on email and Q-zone records preservation, e.g., records value assessment, organization and search, and provide theoretical foundation for practice.
- Understand web users' needs for records preservation and different user group's special needs, and translate their needs to system functional requirements.
- Study user experience and be involved in web service provider's system design.
- Identify effective strategies to eliminate duplication in email preservation.

Parties responsible for personal web records preservation and their relationships: internet service provider

- Improve web platform, provide better user experience, increase security and confidentiality, improve search functionality, and ensure the stability of web platform.
- Provide batch download, management, and classification functions.
- Provide various web services for different user groups to satisfy different needs.
- Better information feedback function, and respond promptly to users' feedback.
- Increase collaboration with information professionals, and seek their comments and suggestions.

Thank you !

